

"In another second Turkey had the child in his arms" Page 104

# THE LITTLE GIRL FROM BACK EAST

BY

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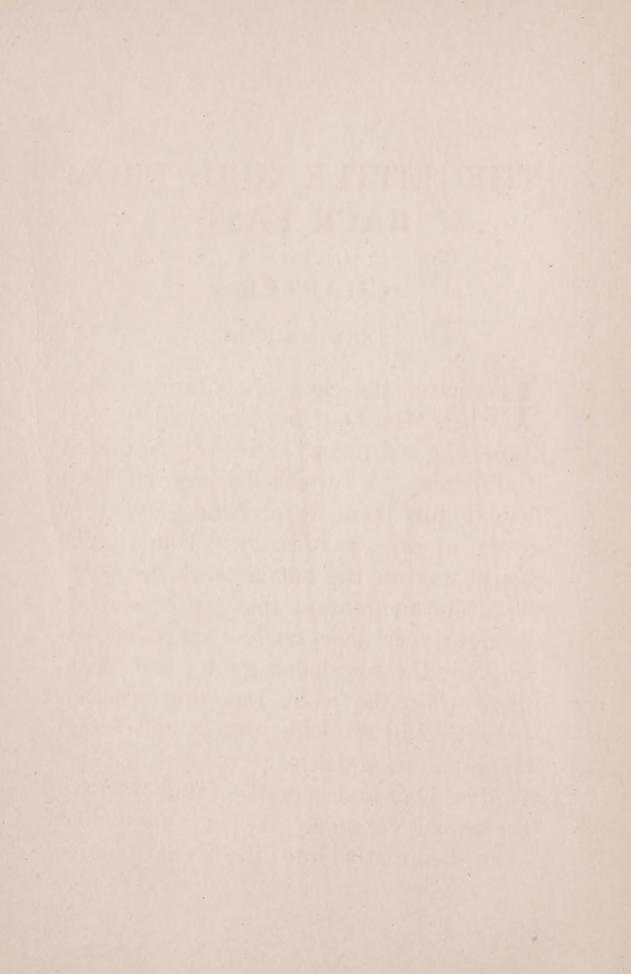
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# THE LITTLE GIRL FROM BACK EAST

#### CHAPTER I

#### NEW FRIENDS

It was at the close of a January day when Mrs. Day, her two children, and Jane, the old nurse, arrived in Southern California. A furnished house had been leased for them beforehand, and they drove at once to their new home. The house was on the outskirts of the town. The blue mountains, that the crystal air brought very near, made a ravishing setting for the rose-laden gables and balconies, while the wide, rambling grounds were thickly set with orange and lemon trees, palms, and semi-tropical shrubbery.

Mrs. Day and her little family crossed the broad veranda. A big Dutch door opened directly into the living-roommade of redwood with a heavy raftered ceiling. Books, pictures, and cloths of strange weaves covered the walls, and there were Indian baskets everywhere of all sizes and patterns. In the capacious fireplace fagots of cypress and oak were

piled up ready for kindling.

The Chinese "boy" met them with a grave smile of welcome. In his small person he united the offices of cook, butler, and man-of-all-work. He looked scrupulously neat and clean in his white linen coat, white apron, and embroidered sandals. It was evident that he had had a fresh hair-cut, which, for John Chinaman, means a clean shave to the width of two inches round the forehead to the nape of the neck; and in honor of the occasion his tightly braided hair was left unbound and further lengthened with a black silk tassel.

With an air of pride and dignity he conducted his new mistress and her family through the well-appointed house, fin-

ishing up with the kitchen as if he had left the best for the last. It was full of savory odors rising from steaming pots and escaping from oven doors, and the shelves, covered with white paper carefully cut into points and scallops, were decorated with shining rows of scoured tins and burnished copper. Then, seeming to think that his duty as cicerone was done, he allowed his new "people" to make the rest of the way alone, and shut himself up in his own quarters.

If any one had asked Mrs. Day why she had come to California she would have said, without hesitation:

"To give Polly a holiday. Polly has mothered the babies and bossed us all until we have got on her nerves—and she on ours. I want to get her away from her maternal responsibilities and try to make a little girl of her."

Polly was only twelve, but she was the oldest of four children, and the only girl. Before she was old enough to be taken

into account as a personality she had a watchful eye on her three little brothers, and saw to it that they had on their overshoes when it was damp and their mufflers when it was cold. At first this was a great comfort to Mrs. Day, for she was an artist and spent much of her time in her studio, but when she found that her little daughter, not satisfied with managing the small brothers, was beginning to take father and mother in hand, Mrs. Day made up her mind that Polly must have a change.

Buddy, the youngest child, now four years old, was not very strong, so Mrs. Day had left the two older boys with their father and grandmother in the New England home, and had come to spend the winter in California for the moral good of the eldest and the physical good of the youngest of her children.

Polly rose early the morning after her arrival, so that she might have a good

long day. She dressed quickly and went out on the balcony on which her room opened. So many birds were singing at once that it seemed like stepping into a huge aviary. The mountains were so intensely blue that the very air seemed to partake of the same color. Buddy and Jane were under Polly's window, fairly shouting with delight over two litters of skye-terrier puppies which they had discovered were also included among their new possessions, while the proud little mothers wagged their bits of tails gratefully. Yuen, the Chinese servant, came up carrying a basket of brushwood and stopped to chatter unintelligibly to the dogs, and to smile good-naturedly upon Buddy and his nurse.

"Come away from the dogs this very minute!" Polly cried, impulsively, from the balcony.

The mother's voice answered her.

"Polly, dear, I want you."

Polly obediently went down the bal-

cony steps to the piazza below and stood before her mother's window.

"Polly, my child, I am going to ask you to begin your life here by not ordering anybody about. If I can trust Buddy to Jane, don't you think you can? I want you to consider yourself just a guest in this beautiful home. All that is asked of you is to be happy—and please don't try to run things."

Polly hung her head. She knew what her mother meant, and was sorry she had

forgotten so soon.

"Oh, Polly, come look at the birds!" Jane called.

Mrs. Day nodded and away Polly went, the shadow already lifted from the eager little face. On a stand under a shady tree was a large bird cage, in which were two canaries. Jane was feeding them through the wires and the birds were breaking into all sorts of musical notes by way of thanks.

"Just think," said Jane, "they live out-

of-doors all the year round. It's no wonder they sing!"

Polly was so taken with the birds that she ran back to her mother to ask if she might not have the exclusive care of the small songsters, and Mrs. Day smiled to herself as she gave the coveted permission. "Polly must mother something," she thought.

Polly cleaned the cage that very morning, and hunted about the grounds till she found a bed of chickweed, wondering meanwhile what she should call her birds since there was no way of telling their real names. Those first few days were all too short for the little girl. She felt as if she were stranded on a beautiful island, like the Swiss Family Robinson, and everything seemed a fresh discovery. Jane and Buddy went about in the same spirit, although Jane did say that it appeared to her like flying in the face of Providence to take your summer in the middle of winter,

and she did hope no harm would come of it!

One morning before the week was out, Polly woke with the feeling that there was nothing to do. She missed Jack and Bob, the little brothers at home and she missed her schoolmates. It seemed strange to have no neighbors. The next place was a large ranch behind a high cypress hedge topped with orange trees that were loaded with fruit. So dense was the green that the house behind it was completely shut from view. Polly thought the place looked stiff and solemn.

After breakfast she went out on her balcony to study her lessons. She had begun her daily school work so as to keep up, as much as possible, with her classes at home. Her canaries were singing blithely, a mocking-bird was vaulting high in the air for insects, and every once in a while swooping down upon the house-cat whenever she came too near his particular tree.

"Now that old mocking-bird is teasing my canaries!" said Polly, looking up from her book.

It certainly looked like the same bird Polly had been watching. There was the same black and gray plumage marked with white, the same graceful shape. But it had changed its gay note into a harsh, rasping call. It was dashing itself first against one side of the cage and then the other, and there was a wild beating of yellow wings within. Polly was about to run down to see what it all meant when there was a rifle shot and the beautiful bird dropped dead. Polly went down the steps two at a time just as a boy broke through the cypress hedge, rifle in hand. He was a big boy with a brown skin and a thick crop of sunburned hair, his corduroy trousers stuffed into a pair of high-laced, dust-colored boots. He seemed all of a color, and Polly was sure she was facing one of the terrible cowboys she had read of, but for the moment she could think only of the shot bird.

"How could you do such a cruel thing?" she cried, with blazing eyes. "You had no right to shoot on our grounds!"

The boy looked at her, and then at the

bird in his hand.

"Why, this is a butcher-bird," he said, bluntly. "Look at your canaries if you want to know why I shot it."

One of the birds was lying dead at the bottom of the cage, the other clung feebly to its perch. Polly was ready to cry, but she kept back the tears and said, in her most dignified manner:

"I thought it was the mocking-bird.

I thought he was just playing."

"No; it's the shrike, the butcher-bird," the boy said. "I heard his call, but I couldn't get my rifle any quicker. If you look close, you'll see he isn't like the mocker. He has a hooked bill like the hawk. That shows he is a bird of prey.

And that black line across his bill and eyes makes him look as if he wore a black mask like a burglar. He's a mean bird. He's always plotting mischief. If it's a smaller bird or a grasshopper he kills it and sticks it on a thorn or a short twig till he's ready to eat. That's his cold storage. He'll imitate the call of little birds and then drop on them and kill them just for the fun of it. He's a coward, I tell you what. Delia will be awfully sorry about the canaries. They're old friends of hers."

"Who's Delia?"

"Delia's my sister. We live on the ranch. You're the little girl from Back East, aren't you?"

"I'm from Boston, if that's what you mean!"

"It's all the same," the boy said, coolly. "How old are you?"

"Twelve."

"That's just Delia's age, but she would make two of you, honest. Delia was raised in California. You'll know it when you see her. I've got to go—I'm out for snakes."

"Snakes!" gasped Polly.

"Yes, rattlers. I've got to get my spiked stick." Picking up his rifle, the boy disappeared through a break in the hedge.

Polly opened the cage door and took up the dead bird tenderly. The other bird seemed to be reviving from its fright, and responded to Polly's gentle words with encouraging little chirps. The next morning Polly went into the garden to see how her bird was getting along. There was a big girl standing sorrowfully at the cage, holding a motionless bird in her hand.

"Oh," exclaimed Polly, "is it dead? I'm so sorry! I thought it would live."

"It is poor little Betty," said the girl. "Turkey told me about the shrike. She was too badly scared to get over it."

There were tears in the big girl's eyes.

"What have you done with Dickey?" she asked.

"He's in the house. I thought perhaps you would like to see him before I buried him."

Delia was a big girl with a little girl's face. Her hair was in thick brown curls cropped to the neck. Her eyes were very brown, too, and her cheeks were a sunburned red. Her neat blue gingham frock came to her shoe-tops. Her hands were remarkably large and so were her feet, but they were well-formed and refined. Polly thought Delia the most beautiful girl she had ever seen, and felt small and insignificant beside her. For ever after Delia would be Polly's standard of comparison.

Polly ran to the house and presently returned with Dickey in a box lined with a bit of white silk. There was room for Betty beside her little mate, and Delia pulled aside the low sweeping branches of a blue spruce and dug a shallow grave.

There was a movement in the dry grasses and a horned toad popped out. Polly jumped back, thinking of "rattlers," and Delia laughed.

"That's Billy. He won't hurt you.

It's my horned toad."

She caught him fearlessly, scratched his head with the tip of her finger, and then turned him over on his back, where he lay as if hypnotized.

"If you frighten them they spurt blood from their eyes," said Delia, letting the

toad go.

Then she looked at Polly curiously. Polly was in a fresh white frock, her long, light brown hair was in smooth braids wound round her head, and tied on each side behind the ear with a blue ribbon. She had a bright, wide-awake look, and her manners were those of the well-bred city girl. Delia thought she had never seen any one so pretty, so dainty in her life before, and suddenly felt clumsy and oversized.

"Turkey told me all about the shrike," said Delia, thinking of the birds again.

"Turkey told you!" said Polly, puz-

zled.

"Yes; he's my brother."

"Oh, the big boy who killed the shrike?"

"Yes, but he's only fourteen, even if he's nearly six feet tall."

"Aren't there any little people out here?" Polly said.

Delia laughed.

"I should say! Are you going to school?"

Polly shook her head importantly.

"Not this winter—mother thinks I can afford to lose a year. Do you go to school?" she asked.

"I should say!" replied Delia.

### CHAPTER II

#### AN INSECT CAVE-DWELLER

'I'm going spider-hunting!" said Delia Scott, a few days later, appearing suddenly at the break in the cypress hedge. "Do you want to come along?"

"It doesn't sound very attractive,"

Polly replied, in her grown-up way.

"Oh, but I'm talking about trap-door spiders. They are a lot of fun. I have to have one for home-work—we've got to describe them in the P. G."

"The P. G., please?"

"Yes; Physical Geography Class. Come along!"

Delia was armed with a trowel and a large sheath-knife. She looked so war-like that Polly's love of adventure got the better of her dislike of spiders, and, after asking her mother's permission the little girl set off with her companion.

"It's a spider that burrows in the ground, and it shuts its house with a trap-door," said Delia, volubly, as they climbed the nearby foothills. When they came to the summit they began their search, but except for a deep hole here and there, where evidently a nest had been dug out and carried away, there was no sign of the spider.

"The trap-door spiders are hunted and sold to the curio-shops, nest and all," said Delia. "They pay two bits for a good specimen. Tourists buy them, you know. But the spider has to be killed, and I don't think I should like to do that for money, should you?"

"I'm pretty sure I wouldn't kill a spider for anything!" said Polly, with emphasis.

"Oh, here is a nest that has been thrown away!" exclaimed Delia.

The trap-door fell back loosely on its hinges. The silk nest was torn. Polly examined it curiously.

"Some of the nests are a foot deep and an inch across," Delia said, "but you don't find them often."

The two girls went together step by step over the hillside, but without success.

"It's worse than hunting for a four-leaf clover," Polly said, straightening up with a sigh.

"We'll have to give it up for to-day," said Delia, regretfully. "It's time to go home. I have to help mother with the supper."

The next morning before breakfast Polly was on the hillside armed with some formidable weapons she had found hanging against the wall in the redwood room. To her great delight she came almost at once, and as if by accident, upon a spider's nest. Looking just like a crack in the sun-baked soil, except that it was a beautifully defined semi-circle, was the much-desired tight-fitting trap-door! Polly began to ply her tools industriously, and then realizing that she did not know

how deep to go, or in what direction, she stopped digging and looked about for a long straw to sound the nest. But when she attempted to open the trap-door she found it as firmly closed as if bolted on the inside. She persevered until the door gave, and at the same time a huge black spider dropped back into the nest.

"I believe he was holding the door fast!" exclaimed Polly.

She then sounded the burrow very carefully with her straw for fear of hurting the spider. The nest was nearly a foot deep—she had found a rare specimen! Polly began to dig furiously and kept on with undiminished vigor until the nest stood like a miniature Bunker's Hill monument in the excavation. When she thought she had gone deep enough she tugged at the monument with both hands until it broke off squarely at the base just below the clay stopper with which the spider seals the end of its burrow. There it was, intact! But when Polly

attempted to lift the great clod of earth, it was so heavy that, without warning, it fell from her hands, and to her dismay broke apart, tearing through the nest. It was a "misty, moisty Day," as Polly's father would have said, that stood over the ruins of her beloved specimen. She shook the nest free from the earth until it lay on the ground like a long, empty, torn silk purse. The spider must have escaped! But suddenly, under her prodding, the lower end of the nest puffed up as if inflated.

"He's there all right!" she cried, forgetting in her excitement to be afraid, and spreading her handkerchief, she dumped into it the remnants of the nest, spider and all, and shouldering her tools went down the hill triumphant. She made straight for the break in the hedge, and met Delia just as she was coming through.

"I'll tell you what we can do," Delia said when she had heard Polly's thrilling

story of the capture. "We'll get a deep flower pot, fill it with earth, and let him build another nest. Then we can see just how he does it."

The girls found the very thing they were in search of, packed it tightly with dry, clay-like soil, and extricating the spider from the ruins of his home, placed him on top of the new ground, where he could build at his leisure.

"He's awful to look at," said Polly, shuddering, as the spider reared up on its hind pair of legs, ready to strike.

"It's a jim-dandy!" said Delia, enthusiastically. "Just a bunch of legs."

The spider was, indeed, an ugly looking fellow, black and shiny, and, when his legs were spread, large enough to cover a silver dollar. One could well believe that his bite is venomous. The girls covered the top of the pot with a piece of mosquito netting, tying it down securely.

It was time then for Delia to go to

school, and all day long, off and on, Polly watched the spider, hoping to see him at work. But he did not stir from the spot where he had been placed and Polly was afraid that he had been hurt in the capture. The following morning Polly visited her spider early. He had disappeared and Polly quickly took off the netting. She gave her call, and Delia came with a bound through the hedge.

"Look," said Polly, in a whisper, "he's dug a hole and shut himself in with a

new trap-door."

Polly was right. The spot where the spider had disappeared had a semi-circular cover of finely worked earth, with an edge of silvery cobweb. The door was so soft that it looked as if a touch would destroy it. The spider had deposited the earth he had dug out of the nest in little heaps along the edge of the pot out of his way. He had begun the construction of his house with the trap-door, and

slamming it in the face of the intruder, was working below in darkness and secrecy.

As the spider works chiefly at night the girls could never catch him at his labors, but each day there was some fresh proof of the little mason's activity. Stones as big as the spider's body had been upheaved from the interior of the nest and shoved out of the way, and in three or four days the new trap-door looked quite like an old one. Whenever the girls tried to raise the door on its silken hinges they were met by a stubborn resistance from within. They learned that the spider holds the door down by clutching it firmly with the mandibles and the first two pairs of feet, while the third and fourth pairs are pressed against the walls of the tube.

Delia came to school with more to say about the trap-door spider and its habits than any other pupil. When the P. G.'s got past trap-door spiders she and Polly hunted up the spot on the hillside where Polly had so laboriously dug out her beautiful specimen, and carefully breaking away the pot they deposited the spider, earth and all, in its ancient home, where, if it were left undisturbed, it might live for many long years. The girls visited the spot from time to time, and the trap-door soon took on a mossgrown, comfortable look. When they tried to open the door they found that it was bolted and double-barred, and to have forced an entrance would have meant the destruction of the house.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE JUNGLE

WHETHER it was because of the dense foliage of the trees, the tangle of climbing roses, geraniums, and grape vines, the general air of inaccessibility, or because of the various animals domiciled on the place, the Scott ranch was known far and near as the Jungle. Besides chickens, ducks, pigeons, a peacock, a pair of beautiful wolf-hounds, Turkey numbered among his "critters" a gopher-snake, an alligator, a monkey, a parrot, and a wild-cat called Griff. Griff had tramped a path as hard as a garden-walk on the extreme outer edge of a wide circle, the center of which was the stake to which his chain was attached. He was a big, full grown cat, standing high on his legs, with a tail that looked as if it had been chopped off short, and

an expression in his big yellow eyes that warned one to keep at a safe distance. In fact, the only one who dared to approach the animal was Turkey. Whenever Griff heard Turkey's voice he stopped his restless pacing, and when the boy came up purred like an amiable house-cat, rubbing his yellow sides, with the greatest friendliness, against his young master.

Since Mr. Scott's death, some years ago now, Mrs. Scott and her children had lived alone on the Jungle and were almost entirely dependent upon the products of the ranch. At an early age, the children were made to feel a fine sense of responsibility toward the beautiful old place. Mrs. Scott took them into her confidence, her bank-book was open to them, and the good of one was the good of all. Terence, more familiarly "Turkey" and "Terry" and again, "Terrible," was gardener; Delia raised chickens, both children selling their products for the

common good, and no happier boy and girl lived in all California than Terence and Delia Scott.

Ever since he was a little chap, Turkey's great ambition was to go to college. His father had been a college man and the boy wished to be like his father. "If you go, my son, you will have to earn the money," the mother said. "You know just what we have."

His first money-making project was worthy of the boy's ingenuity. He had a tame chicken, a beautiful barred Plymouth Rock. Turkey called him Uncle Sam in honor of his country. The boy made a small seat that set over the back wheel of his bicycle. On this Uncle Sam was mounted, sitting down comfortably when the wheel was going, and standing up majestically when the wheel came to a stop. Turkey would ride at full speed along the streets, the chicken crouching behind him, and wherever there was a prospect of a paying "house" he would

dismount and put Uncle Sam through his stunts, the most fetching of which was what the boy was pleased to call "bareback riding." The chicken would jump from the wheel to the ground and again from the ground to the wheel in ludicrous imitation of a circus-rider, while Turkey, in the capacity of ringmaster, cracked his long whip and urged on the bird with truly dramatic effect. So good-natured was the boy, so merry his smile, that no one could resist the appeal of the cap when it was passed round.

When he got older, he found more dignified means of earning his way to college. In the long vacation, the big, stalwart boy was in great demand in the fruit orchards and made money. The picking began with apricots, peaches, prunes, grapes, olives, almonds, and English walnuts following in turn. At the Christmas and Easter holidays Turkey would be found in the packing houses,

packing oranges and lemons with recordbreaking rapidity.

Not only did Turkey learn how to make money early but how to share it. Mrs. Scott remembered the words of Newman:

"What we have hardly won we are unwilling to part with, so that a man who has himself made his wealth will commonly be penurious, or, at least, will not part with it except in exchange for what will reflect credit on himself or increase his importance."

To save Terence from the perils of avariciousness the mother taught her boy to set aside a certain proportion of his earnings for the poor.

"You are earning not only for yourself, but for some one less fortunate," the mother said. "It is a great privilege, my son."

So Turkey had always some pet charity on hand. Just now it was his ambition to get a pair of braces for a little cripple who lived in the neighborhood. Far from showing a spirit of greed the boy was so generous that often it was with difficulty that Mrs. Scott restrained him from "borrowing from himself," as he expressed it, when the case particularly appealed to his ever-ready sympathy.

But a boy with so much energy must occasionally break out in the wrong place, and so it was with Terence. He dearly loved a practical joke, and some of the pranks he played at school were so daring that they had found their way into the local papers, although thus far his name had escaped publicity. It was generally regarded as a pretty sure thing that it was he who had taken the skylight off the assembly hall at the High School, where he was a freshman, and let the physiology skeleton down from the top where it dangled in mid-air in a highly conspicuous manner until it was removed. It was suspected, but never proved, that it was the same boy who had stacked up in the assembly hall the school-books abstracted from a dozen different school-rooms. And it was, furthermore, an open secret that it was Terence Scott, known to be somewhat of an electrician, who had interchanged all the wires in school, so that no two bells rang at the same time, and at all times some bell was ringing out an unexpected summons, while one particularly clamorous bell was found permanently attached to the battery where it kept on ringing until the battery gave out.

But Terence was a good student and so well liked by his teachers and school-mates that no one cared to put the responsibility of the various performances that were enacted from time to time upon the real culprit; and thus far, thanks to unusual favor, Terence had escaped unscotched.

### CHAPTER IV

#### THE OSTRICH FARM

PAPA, whatever is that yonder in the valley? It appears to me like a man on horseback; and there is another, and a third," he added; "and now they are in full gallop. Can they really be the Arabs of the desert?"

"No, certainly not," I replied with a laugh; "but take my telescope, and tell me what you can make of this wonderful sight."

"It is stranger than ever, papa," said the boy. "The moving objects look like herds of cattle, high-loaded wagons or wandering haystacks. Ha, ha! What can it all be?"

Swiss Family Robinson.

Polly liked nothing better than to go to the Jungle. It was not like any place she had ever seen before. The floor of the wide, bricked veranda was covered with bright Navajo rugs, and the orange orchard came up almost to the veranda. So regular were the rows of trees that, whichever way you looked, they seemed to wheel into position like a cavalry formation, always facing you, and you were allowed to pick the very biggest, juiciest navel orange that you could find! The parrot, tethered to a long steel chain, dropped down from his perch whenever he heard a footstep on the veranda, and laboriously toiled across the floor in search of a possible biscuit.

Polly did not mind the parrot, but Choppy, the monkey, was not at all to her liking. Choppy was as full of tricks as his master. Turkey had taught his monkey to disappear in the branches of the pine tree where he was generally tied, and at a signal to drop down upon whoever happened to be standing below. It always took some time before the victim of the joke could see how funny it was, and, in the meantime, Turkey and his monkey had wisely disappeared. No, decidedly, Polly did not like Choppy!

It was Washington's Birthday, a long holiday for Delia and Terence. Polly had gone over to the Jungle early, and the three children had distributed themselves comfortably on the old veranda, which meant that they were down on the floor on the Navajo rugs. Delia, who read very well, was reading aloud Swiss Family Robinson. Turkey mounted butterflies and beetles to catch up with his P.G. work, and Polly ground rose-petals through a chopper to make herself a string of beads, and perhaps a rosary out of the sweet-smelling pulp. Delia had come to the chapter on ostriches where "Jack" tames a wild ostrich and uses him as a riding-horse.

"An ostrich can never be broken," Turkey said, with all the decisiveness of a

"P. G." "They may show him in harness and all that, but it's only faked up. He isn't made to carry a load on his back. He can't carry any weight more than a few minutes at a time."

"What about feather-weights?" said Delia, slyly.

Turkey looked scornful. "Did you ever see a live ostrich, Polly?" he asked suddenly.

No, Polly hadn't.

"All right. What do you say to our all going to the ostrich farm this afternoon?"

"If Delia would care to go I should like nothing better," said Polly.

Delia was only too glad, and, taking their luncheon, the children set off to see the largest birds in existence. There were nearly five hundred ostriches on exhibition at the farm, the greater number of which were herded in a general pen. Here they stalked up and down with

haughty heads and drooped eyelids, each with an air of carrying a chip on his shoulder.

"They stay in this pen till they grow up," said Turkey.

"Grow up!" exclaimed Polly, looking at the gigantic birds. "How much far-

ther can they go?"

"Oh, all the way to between eight and nine feet, and they do it at the rate of a foot a month for the first seven months of their lives. Why, a new-born chick is as large as a full grown duck, and weighs three pounds. One ostrich egg will make an omelette as big as two dozen of our hens' eggs, and just as good. Come, let's follow the guide."

"The ostrich is a bad-tempered bird," the guide was saying, "and so treacherous that it is never safe to approach him off your guard. If he is mad he will not hesitate to attack his keeper—in fact, he has so little brains that he doesn't know his keeper from anybody else. If you

will look at his small, flat head you will see the reason why. There isn't any room for brains. He's so stupid that, although he can jump five or six feet in the air, he hasn't sense enough to clear his fence. But stupid as he is, it is not true that he hides his head in the sand, imagining that his pursuer can't see him. Nor does the ostrich leave its eggs on the ground to be hatched in the sun. Twice a day, morning and evening, the nest is left uncovered for a quarter of an hour to allow the eggs to cool. But otherwise the eggs are covered forty days and nights.

"You will see that the foot of the ostrich consists of two powerful toes. This heavy mailed claw is his chief means of defense. He kicks forward with a downward scratching movement, and it is only from a height of three feet that he can kick dangerously. It is for this reason that, although he has been known to charge a horse he will run away from a little dog.

"The average life of an ostrich is from forty to fifty years; but they have been known to live to be a hundred. They take their mates for life. As soon as mated the couple go to housekeeping by themselves, and put out their own door-plate."

The guide stopped before a large pen where, on a sign, was painted in white letters, "George and Martha Washington."

"This couple have just celebrated their golden wedding. They have had fifty years of married bliss, and are good for as many more. And here's President and Mrs. Taft. Watch the President smile!" The guide threw him an orange and as the bird opened his wide mouth it looked as if the top of his head would fall off like a lid.

"This big bird, weighing over three hundred pounds, and over eight feet in height, is Emperor William. Look out for Billy—he's dangerous! And here we have General Grant and his second wife.

General Grant killed his first mate because she would not do her part toward hatching the eggs. Ostriches share the duties of brooding between them, going on and off the eggs at fixed intervals. The male bird takes his place at four o'clock in the afternoon, and sits through the night. This is a surviving instinct of the desert, his plumage, being darker than the female's, making him less conspicuous to the skulking foe. At eight in the morning the hen relieves her mate. Well, General Grant was very fair to Mrs. Grant and not only took the long end of the job, but gave her an hour for lunch besides. But Mrs. Grant didn't want to be bothered with family cares—I guess she was a suffragette—and one day refused to sit at all. The General stood it till he was tired of it and then must have fought it out with her, for one morning she was found dead in the pen with a big hole in her breast. The General then went on the nest himself and there he sat day and night till the time was up when the happy father presented his family of fifteen healthy chicks to the farm. But he was so thin and weak he could hardly stand on his little old legs. He was put in the mating-pen again, and you can wager the second Mrs. Grant hasn't any new-fangled notions, but is just the good old kind!"

The guide then gave the General an orange. He swallowed it whole at a gulp; and the guide followed it by half a dozen more. The oranges, one after another, corkscrewed down the whole length of the gigantic neck, the big lump appearing first on one side and then the other, to everybody's amusement. The guide then scattered some corn upon the broad back of the second Mrs. Grant and while she picked up the grains with the utmost unconcern called attention to the fact that she could do up her own shirt-waist!

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, the ostrich is very fond of any glittering object. He will help himself to your scarf pins, earrings, or any bright thing that catches his eye. If you are smoking a pipe, he may snatch it out of your mouth, mistaking it for a 'sparkler,' and swallow it without turning a feather."

There was a general shrinking back from the pen. The guide then asked if any one would like to ride. Turkey stepped forward.

"Now, youngster, you've got to look out for yourself. Remember an ostrich kicks forward, and keep out of his way."

The guide jumped into the pen, caught one of the less belligerent ostriches, and held her firmly while Turkey got on from the mounting-block.

Holding on to the wings of his mount, Turkey jolted along for a few paces, the guide keeping back the other ostriches with a heavy stick.

"Look out for Sultan!" some one cried from outside the bars. A big bird suddenly broke through the herd and made at Turkey with open beak and outstretched neck, hissing viciously. The guide, keeping well out of the reach of the hoof-like toe, sprang to the boy's rescue, beating off Sultan with vigorous blows while Turkey, urging on his ostrich, rode up to the block where he was glad to dismount.

"That was a close call," said the guide.

There was a roar from the herding pen and then another; and soon all over the farm the ostriches were answering one another, the heavy booming sound, which in Africa is called "brooming," resembling the roar of the lion.

### CHAPTER V

# "MISS FISHY"

The children had their luncheon in a shady spot of the dell, where they could watch the various antics of the clumsy birds. When they had finished Polly said, with her innate love of adventure:

"Let's go see 'Emperor William' again!"

Over the pen of the gigantic bird was painted in large white letters "Dangerous." A nice old lady sauntered by as the children stood before the pen. "My—the 'Dan-groose'!" she said. "Why, I thought it was an ostrich. May be it's a different species."

The children turned away so that the good old soul should not see that they were laughing.

Polly was frankly interested in the

"Emperor." He had a splendid coat of black curly feathers, and his wing feathers were beautiful white plumes which, when raised, hung like a heavy soft fringe all around his body. His shins and beak were a coral red; and altogether "Billy" was an unusually fine specimen of the Nubian ostrich. The guide was allowing Delia, at the moment, to feed an ostrich from her hand, and the big little girl was very proud of the distinction. But Polly had eyes only for "Billy" and, forgetting the warning sign, came closer and closer, as if fascinated, to the bars of the pen. Suddenly the big flat beak shot out; Polly felt a violent tug at her hat which, the next second, was dragged off her head, irrespective of hat pins, and trampled under the heavy mailed foot. With a sensation of being half-scalped, Polly shrieked, pressing her two hands to her head. Instantly a crowd gathered, but the "Emperor" was only hungry, not vicious, and tearing the rhinestone buckle from its superfluous lace and ribbons, swallowed it with apparent relish, and while the buckle gyrated prominently down the long neck looked round for more such appetizers.

To Polly's unspeakable indignation the crowd burst into a roar of laughter. But Turkey, always quick to act, jumped into the pen, and fighting off the big fellow with a club he had snatched from a near-by guide, rescued what was left of Polly's headgear. As a hat, however, it was utterly beyond recognition, and much to Polly's discomfiture, she had to go bareheaded. Delia, with ready sympathy, pulled off her own hat and went bareheaded, too. Polly quickly recovered herself, for she was too well-bred to allow the incident to spoil the day for her two friends, and when they were going home the manager of the farm gave Polly a beautifully decorated ostrich egg with an ostrich painted on one side and a nest of eggs on the other to make up for the loss

of her hat. The manager knew the incident would get into the daily papers, and it was a graceful and ingenious way of securing a bit of free advertising.

When they got home the Scott children, as a fitting ending to the holiday, were asked to have supper with Polly, Mrs. Scott coming over, too. The dining-room was decorated with flags and pennants, and on the table were red, white, and blue flowers, and at each plate was a bon-bon box in shape of the historic hatchet with a bunch of candied cherries on top.

The great incident of the day was, of course, the hat episode, and so modest was Turkey of his share in the adventure that Polly held undisputed the rôle of chief actor. She was not slow to make the most of it, and before long, quite forgot that she was only a "guest" in the house, and was trying to run things generally. Buddy, with Jane behind his chair, had been allowed to come to table, and, much

to Jane's annoyance, Polly spread the little boy's bread, poured his milk, and said what he should have and what he should not have. "Pollykins!" the mother said, from time to time, in a tone of gentle remonstrance.

Yuen brought on the dessert with tremendous effect. It was a towering whipped cream meringue, decorated with the national colors in honor of the day. The "boy" was immensely gratified at the enthusiasm with which his patriotic offering was received, but Mrs. Day looked askance at the meringue. The white she knew was whipped cream, the red might be the juice of cranberries, but where on earth did the blue come from? To her motherly eyes the blue looked nothing short of deadly.

Yuen was a good cook, but when his imagination was aroused it was quite impossible to tell to what lengths he might go. Some of the dishes he served were wonderful to see, but somehow one felt

as if a pure food guarantee should accompany them. The Chinaman was very sensitive, and unless his special dishes were received with due appreciation he did not hesitate to show that his feelings were hurt. This meant nothing short of a domestic catastrophe, and to save the situation, Mrs. Day said, with her usual tact, after cutting the meringue:

"Now, children, what do you say to taking our dessert into the redwood room before the log fire?"

There was an outburst of cheers, and each got up from the table bearing on a dainty plate a gorgeous slice of the national colors, five inches deep. Mrs. Day explained her object, promising them their dessert later. She then stirred up the logs, and when the flames had died to coals each one dropped his slice delicately into the fire—and Yuen Wong's feelings were spared!

"Now I am going to give you a concert," said Polly, jumping up. She wound up the phonograph and put a record on the machine. Terence got up, too, and courteously offered his assistance.

"Oh, please sit down!" Polly said. "I am quite used to doing this myself."

There was a touch of patronage in her tone, and Turkey looked uncomfortable. While the phonograph was playing "Shepherd's Dance" Polly left the room, presently returning with the big lighted library lamp which she carefully set where she could have a good light on the records. Mrs. Day watched the performance with nervous anxiety.

"Now, Miss Fishy," she said, "will you kindly ask Yuen to come for the lamp and take it back where it belongs? We have plenty of light."

There was something in her mother's tone that called for instant obedience, and very crestfallen, Polly did as she was told.

"Miss Fishy is such a funny name," said Delia. "Where did you get it?"

Polly sat down quickly beside Delia and said in an anxious whisper:

"That's mother's name for me. No one ever calls me that but mother—not even Daddy or the boys. It's our secret."

The truth was that "Miss Fishy" was short for "Miss Officious." Whenever Polly was making herself unpleasantly conspicuous, it was by pronouncing the hated name that Mrs. Day gave her little daughter timely warning of impending disaster. Polly did not need a second hint—she knew too well from experience that it meant some awful blow to her pride, and the mere thought of being disgraced before the Jungle people was enough to put the child at once on her good behavior.

Turkey then gave the concert, Polly making herself his willing assistant.

"Mother," the little girl said, in a whisper, "do look at Mrs. Scott! Isn't she beautiful! Just like Delia grown up!" Mrs. Scott was sitting in the firelight,

her lovely dark hair in heavy waves, her deep eyes full of peace. Polly was right—Mrs. Scott was beautiful—she looked like the mother of the world!

Then Mrs. Day brought in the promised dessert, which, to the children's delight, was popcorn to be popped over the log fire! Delia was asked to pop the corn, and Jane, with Buddy looking on, was allowed to pour the hot maple syrup over the swelling snowy heap. Everybody was busy doing something, and everybody was laughing and talking at the same time, while Polly fluttered about in her white frock and floating ribbons like the dear little girl that she was, and not like a make-believe young lady.

When it was time to go Turkey said, in his big, manly way:

"We've had a fine time, Mrs. Day. It's been great from start to finish!"

"I should say," Delia chimed in gratefully, shaking hands with Mrs. Day like a boy and making the good lady wince. "I'd like all my days to be Polly days!"

Everyone laughed, but Delia did not look as if she had said anything unusual.

When Polly knelt at her mother's side that night she was an unusually long time making her examination of conscience, which, as was her practice, she did silently.

"Mother," she said, after her act of contrition, in a clear earnest voice, "I am never going to be Miss Fishy again. I want to be like Delia Scott—she's always so gentle and kind, so careful of people's feelings. And she'll do anything for you!"

Then Polly, getting into her mother's lap, told how Delia had gone bareheaded at the ostrich farm. "Nobody would have thought of that but Delia!" said Polly. "And, mother dear, I'm going halves with Delia in my ostrich egg. As long as I am here it will be mine, and when I go away it shall be Delia's."

# CHAPTER VI

# "TERRIBLE"

Turkey was industriously picking oranges in the Jungle on Monday morning. His ladder rested against the heavy branches, and he dropped the oranges, deftly cut from their stems with a pair of clippers, into the canvas bag slung from his shoulder and resting on his hip.

"Why, Turkey, haven't you any school to-day?" asked Polly, coming upon the

boy unexpectedly.

"I'm not going to-day," he answered gruffly. The bag was full, and coming down the ladder, he unbuckled the bottom of the bag and poured its contents into a packing-box at the foot of the tree.

"But, Turkey, I thought you never missed a day!" said Polly, persistently.

"I'm not going to-day, anyway," he said, climbing back among the branches.

It was quite plain that he did not want to talk, and quite as plain, as Polly passed the pine tree, that Choppy did.

"You're foolish!" she said, looking up at the monkey, but making her remark at

a safe distance.

The next day Turkey was still picking oranges, but Polly contemplated him from afar. "Turkey is hateful," she said, "and I'm not going near him." When Delia came home from school Polly said:

"I wish somebody would tell me why Turkey isn't going to school. I know he's not staying home just to pick or-

anges."

"It's no secret," said Delia, sadly. "Turkey is suspended."

"Suspended! Turkey!"

"Yes. Some one turned the fire hose down the basement stairs of the High, and put four feet of water into the cellar. They think Turkey did it because he has played so many practical jokes. But he would never do anything like that. He's

never mean—his jokes are only funny. It's all in the paper. Wait, I'll show you."

Delia ran into the house to get the paper, and the two girls read together a detailed account of the "Latest High School Prank." The damage done was considerable. Plaster and walls were injured, and in addition to this, a number of new desks and chairs for school use that had lately been unpacked in the basement were badly damaged, if not ruined. The marauders were taken to task for showing so little school spirit as to wantonly injure the property of the school. The principal of the "High" was quoted as saying that, in all probability, the responsibility of the affair could be fixed upon the same boy who had hung the laboratory skeleton in the skylight, interchanged the wires of the electric bells, and stacked the school-books in the assembly hall. The principal said, furthermore, that this latest affair was of too serious a nature to be tolerated—that it had transgressed all the ordinary school laws, and that the boy or boys responsible for the flooding of the cellar would probably be dealt with severely if caught.

Polly gasped. "It's dreadful. What do you think they will do to Turkey?"

"They've got to prove it first!" said Delia, indignantly.

Turkey was angry. He felt that he had been unfairly treated. When he had denied all complicity in the affair his word had not been taken, and he had been indefinitely suspended by the Superintendent of Schools. Before the blow had fallen, Mr. Brion, the Physical Geography teacher, had had a talk with the boy. Now, Mr. Brion, in spite of the dignity of his position and the several initials that followed his name in the school prospectus, was not much more than an overgrown boy himself. He looked like a giant, had a strong, rugged face, and thick red hair, and when he was a univer-

sity man had achieved an intercollegiate reputation as quarter-back.

Terence Scott was a boy after his own heart. Moreover, Terence Scott was the strength of the football team, and if he should be expelled it would be a terrific loss to the "High."

"Terence," Mr. Brion began, "the trick doesn't look like one of yours, and I'm ready to believe you when you say you didn't do it."

"You are right, sir. I didn't do it. It was a stupid thing to do. Anybody can turn a hose into a cellar."

"I'm rather of the opinion, though, that you know who did it. Am I right again?"

"If I should know, you wouldn't expect me to tell, Mr. Brion," Terence said, quietly.

"You know, then!" the teacher said, quickly.

Terence frowned.

"I'm not asking you to tell," Mr. Brion

continued. "But if I knew it would save me a lot of trouble, and you too, my boy."

The next day Terence was suspended. To show their loyalty, his classmates followed Turkey as much as possible into exile. The Jungle, out of school hours, was fairly infested with boys, and Terence Scott was the hero of the moment.

"If you know who did it, drop a hint, and I'll see it's found out without mixing you in it," said Jack Van Wert, Turkey's chum.

"If they ask you, just tell them you don't know, Van," said Terence with a grin.

The boy's friends cropped up everywhere. Old and young, rich and poor alike, all had a good word to say for him. One man, the owner of a fruit ranch, went to the principal and said:

"I don't believe you know the kind of boy you are putting out of school. All summer long, year after year, Terence Scott has picked fruit for me. I have known him to pick his forty boxes of apricots a day. He picks good honest boxes, and doesn't hunt out the little ones. And it is the same with all the crops in turn. Terence can't afford to lose his schooling, and you are losing a good boy."

"I can't help it," said the principal.

"I am as sorry as anybody, for he is one of our best students, but I have to make an example of him. He has been courting trouble ever since he came into school, and he is only getting his deserts."

Turkey would have been less than human not to have felt flattered by the attention he received on all hands, and perhaps for the moment he forgot what this shortlived glory was costing him. Toward the end of the week, however, the full force of the empty days came upon him. His future career was in question. He became so surly that the boys forsook the Jungle. Delia and Polly kept out of his way, and Mrs. Day, after having had her invitations refused again and

again, no longer asked him to the house. The boy's only friend was his mother, and she herself was afraid to show how much his friend she was. Turkey was indeed the "Terrible!"

# CHAPTER VII

### THE 'GATOR MAN

A SECOND week went by and still Terence was not recalled. Polly went over to the Jungle early on Saturday morning. She fairly danced as she went along.

"Delia," she cried, "where's Turkey?
Mother wants us all to go to the alligator

farm to-day!"

"But Turkey's gone. He's been gone an hour. He didn't say where he was going, but he had on his corduroys and he had his spiked stick. I think he's gone up the back mountains."

"Dear me, I'm sorry! Mother thought he would like it. But we can go any way,

can't we?"

"I should say!" Delia replied, characteristically.

The "alligator farm" was laid out on

the banks of a small mountain stream. which in its course had formed a number of little lakes and ponds where the alligators lived in comfort and comparative freedom. Animals of the same size were kept together, the very young in one lake, those a little older in another, and so on according to age and strength. This has to be done because alligators are cannibals and feed on one another. The animals ranged all the way from newlyhatched babies scarcely larger than a lizard to huge monsters twelve feet or more in length. These animals live long and grow slowly. Those of two feet in length are about ten years of age, while those of twelve or more feet may be upwards of two hundred years old.

The alligator is an ugly creature. He has a broad, flat muzzle and small wicked eyes that watch you unblinkingly. His great mouth extends beyond the ears and is full of sharp teeth of different sizes. When a tooth is shed or broken, a new

one comes up beneath the hollow base of the old one. Sometimes in the jaw of a dead alligator may be seen three or four of these waiting teeth, packed like a nest of thimbles.

They are hunted in their native swamps for their skins and teeth, or for the purpose of the showman. Catching the unwieldy creature alive is a dangerous undertaking, for he then changes from what looked like a drifting log into a thing of life, fierce and horrible. After the hunters have "spotted" a den, the alligator is prodded with a long pole until, infuriated, the animal seizes it in his jaws. He then holds on with all the tenacity of a bulldog, and in this manner is dragged up on shore, where he is securely bound with strong ropes. One snap of the powerful jaws is enough to crush a man's leg, one blow of the great horny tail sufficient to sweep a man into the swamp.

The hunt for skins is often carried on by night with the aid of a jack lamp. The alligator's eye, when "shined," looks like a ball of red fire on the water. The hunter paddles noiselessly to within a few feet of the herd, where they lie steadfastly watching the light as if fascinated. The heavily charged gun is fired, but before the monsters sink the grapple-hook is used and they are dragged into the boat. Frequently thirty or forty are killed in one night.

The nest of the alligator is made of sand and rubbish. The eggs look like goose eggs, only somewhat longer, and a "clutch" consists of from thirty to sixty eggs. The mother then scratches a layer of rubbish over the eggs, completely concealing them, and stands on guard until they are hatched by the heat of the sun. During this period she is very savage, attacking without hesitation anybody or anything that comes near her nest.

Polly and Delia were hanging over the rail of a pond where there were hundreds of small, squirming, newly-hatched alligators. In their clean, glossy, black or dark brown skins with orange-colored stripes, wriggling tails and bodies, they were very attractive little creatures, and Polly was yearning to hold one in her hand. Suddenly they heard a well-known voice pitched in the sing-song tone of the practiced guide.

"Get acquainted with Evangeline, the

two-hundred-year-old alligator!"

"That's Turkey, as sure as you live!" said Delia. The girls hurried in the direction of the voice, and there, sure enough, was Terence, in his capacity of guide, standing in the pen of a monster alligator!

He gave the girls an amused look as they came up, and then, in the same singsong voice, went on:

"Maybe, because she is almost toothless, you think she can't do anything!"

He jerked his cap toward the closed jaws, which instantly opened and came together like a steel trap, giving forth a tremendous ringing noise due to the wide roof of the mouth that acted like a sounding board.

"She could easily break a man's leg with her toothless gums," Turkey said. "There's one hundred and fifty pounds pressure in those old jaws!"

He dashed his cap at the angry jaws again, and Delia and Polly impulsively cried out together, "Don't, Turkey!"

Everybody turned to look at the two children, and Turkey laughed. He jumped over the fence of the enclosure and said, in a low tone:

"The regular 'gator man is off, and I'm on the job. It's a lot of fun, and I'm making a pot of money. Now don't be a goose, Delia. I'm not taking any chances, and I've a big crowd to amuse."

Going back to the pen, Turkey forced Evangeline to open her mouth again to show that the great coral-pink throat was so arranged that the alligator can seize its prey and sink to the bottom of the water without danger of suffocation, although the jaws be widely stretched. This arrangement is a sort of collar or trap-door at the base of the tongue—and as the alligator drowns its prey before eating, it is an important provision of nature.

It was amazing the wealth of unpremeditated information Turkey poured out, and if at any time he was challenged, he had such a ready answer that it was like the gentle answer that turneth away wrath. Soon the crowd was following Terence as part of the show, and everybody was amused.

## CHAPTER VIII

THE 'GATOR MAN (CONTINUED)

In one part of the alligator farm was a low-walled enclosure, where all kinds of unpleasant creatures, such as snakes, Gila monsters, iguanas, lizards, horned toads, and the like, were congregated. Armed with his spiked stick Turkey vaulted unconcernedly over the wall and picked up a gopher-snake longer by some feet than the boy himself. Letting the snake swing from his bare, outstretched arm by the last coil of its tail, Turkey said:

"He's got the muscle! You see he's hanging from my arm by the tip of his tail, just as you would hang from a horizontal bar by your chin." Then disengaging the snake, the boy said, in an easy, conversational tone:

"We used to have a boa constrictor all

of twenty feet long; and as big round as a man's thigh, but he got away last winter just about the time one of the steampipes in the new courthouse sprang a leak. The tinker came in with his tools and was given the key to the basement. In ten minutes he was upstairs again, hat off, hair on end! He said he had gone down with his monkey wrench and things and found the pipe. 'I set down on the pipe a minute while I was getting ready,' he said, 'and all of a sudden it seemed to me like the darned thing slipped from under me like a streak o' greased lightning, and I fell over backwards.' And he said he guessed he wouldn't fix that pipe till the next day. The tinker doesn't know yet that it was our little old boa constrictor!"

The manager, who was watching his new "'gator man" from the circle of spectators smiled, and he and Turkey exchanged glances.

"You're all right!" he said, loud enough for the boy to hear.

Turkey then stirred up the snakes, pointing out the coral-snake, the milksnake (the last named has the reputation of milking a cow when it is hungry), and the king-snake, "wearing all its engagement rings," as Terence called the black and red stripes that ring its body. The "rattlers" were in a separate cage, but Turkey prodded them with his pointed stick till the air was a-whirr with their rattling. He picked up the horned iguana, green and venomous-looking, and obligingly posed it on the wall of the enclosure for the young woman with a kodak, and in fact proved himself a prince of showmen.

The hospital was an enclosure for disabled alligators. Now, as everybody knows, Turkey was a kind-hearted boy, but nevertheless it must be admitted there was a note of keen enjoyment as he exhibited the infirmities and physical shortcomings of the unfortunate saurians.

"This old fellow with the permanently

dislocated jaw tore up a lot of our 'gators till Big Joe, the veteran of the farm, nearly five hundred years old, got back at Rastus and broke his jaw," Turkey said. "Benny got that big hole in his snout when he was hooked on shore down in the swamps of Louisiana. Mabel is minus a paw because she and Roxana couldn't get along; but before she let go she gave Roxana a bite that's left her string-halted in the left leg for life. Horatius-at-the-Bridge acquired his three-cornered gait by getting into a quarrel with his maternal uncle. We have a choice assortment of cripples here, as you can see, but don't break your hearts over them. They're not sensitive to pain and don't know they are hurt till they are knocked out."

The next thing on the programme was feeding some of the breeding stock. The compound being enclosed in wire netting, and the creatures having a large area of the banks on which to bask in the sunshine, a good view of the feast could be

had. The alligator is a scavenger and preferably likes his meat "high." His fare consists for the most part of waste meat sent to the farm from the great packing yards, and chickens, ducks, and pigeons that are killed before being thrown to him.

Turkey threw large pieces of meat into the pool, which the alligators dragged under water.

"This is 'dog'!" Turkey said, holding aloft a large piece of meat. "Watch Plutarch fight for it."

Plutarch fastened his teeth in the meat, while Terence held fast to the other end. Then followed a strange performance. With the grip of a bulldog, the alligator held on to the meat, turning over and over like a revolving cylinder, first its dark horny back uppermost and then its white underbody. The meat "gave" at last, and Plutarch made off with his booty.

Then came the exhibition of trained

alligators "shooting the chutes." The top of the structure, which is built on the edge of a pool, is gained by an inclined pathway ribbed at intervals with transverse pieces of wood. Breathing hard, snorting, shuffling along on their short clumsy paws, the alligators, one by one, more or less unwillingly toil up the steep ascent. When the top is reached the animal has no alternative but to slide down the opposite side, a drop of some thirty feet, into the water. This always raises a shout of amusement from the spectators.

"That's Josephine, the famous Empress of the French! Watch her walk!" Terence said, as a remarkably awkward alligator plodded to the foot of the incline. "And here comes Napoleon!" he shouted, as a big saurian, its feet together, came down the slide, willy nilly, and plunged into the water with a tremendous splash. "Here you have a living illustration of the fall of Napoleon.

That's the way he dropped off the map of Europe!"

The visitors to the farm then followed Terence to a pen where there were herded two or three hundred small alligators from six to eighteen months old, not any longer than a lizard.

"Here, Gwendolen!" Turkey said, making a dive after one of them. "You, John Sullivan, keep out of the way!"

"How do you know them apart?" one

of the visitors said, admiringly.

"Nothing easier!" he rattled off. "There's Katherine of Aragon! See her look up when she hears her name! There's the twins, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde! Oh, you Gentleman Joe! And here's Xenophon, Heliogabalus and Julius Cæsar all in a bunch!"

Turkey was enjoying the situation to the utmost.

"Who wants to hold the Lily Maid of Astolat?" he asked, holding out a tiny 'gator.

Turkey's offer was not taken up with any enthusiasm till Delia and then Polly put out their hands. Terence gave the Lily Maid to Delia, and then fished out Sir Launcelot for Polly. The little creatures were so gentle, so harmless, their bodies so soft and warm—not in the least clammy as one might expect—that the two children laughed for joy, and soon everybody was asking to hold a baby 'gator.

After the incubators, where most of the eggs are hatched, had been visited, Turkey, talking volubly all the time, courteously but determinedly, led the way to the gate marked Exit, and almost before it knew it, the crowd found itself on the outside of the farm, and Turkey was ready to begin with another audience.

When Polly went home she said to her mother;

"Turkey and Delia do the most wonderful things, and act as if they weren't doing anything. You just find out by accident. And, mother, they don't care a fig about clothes, yet they always seem to have on the right things. I wish I had a khaki suit like Delia's, and mother, dear, may I have my hair cut short like hers?"

"But, my child, your hair won't look like Delia's. Hers is curly—yours straight."

"I don't care, mother. It would be out of the way, and I shouldn't have to be brushed and combed every minute. Please, mother, dear!"

Mrs. Day gave Polly her wish, although she groaned when she saw the beautiful, long, glossy hair fall before the shears. But the little girl looked so pretty with her hair cut squarely at the neck in the Dutch fashion and a bow on top to keep the front locks out of her eyes, that Mrs. Day did nothing for a week but make studies of Polly in water colors and oils.

When Turkey first saw Polly after her hair-cut he said:

"Polly, you must have been born in June."

"How did you guess?" said Polly

"Why, 'then, if ever, come perfect Days'!"

"Well, I wasn't born in June at all!" said Polly, triumphantly. "I was born on the worst day you ever saw, mother says; all sliddy and slidey, and snowy and sleety."

"I wonder if Choppy would recognize you," said Turkey reflectively, feeling that his labored compliment was wasted. Polly started and looked up. She was just beneath the fatal tree. Squealing, with both hands over her cropped head, Polly ran to cover.

## CHAPTER IX

### NICK CARTER

Turkey was busy digging a cellar under his tent-house behind the apricot-orchard. He threw out the earth in great shovelfuls, although it was already piled higher than his head. Whenever Turkey had anything on his mind he generally got into a deep hole with a shovel. Not that he was digging to-day without purpose. It had always been a cherished scheme of his to build a cave under his tent-house, line it with cobblestones brought from the arroyoseco, and close the door not only with lock and key but with bolt and bar. Here he meant to keep such treasures as toads, lizards, and snakes, living or dead; cyanide-jars where he could drop in a "specimen" without a howl of distress from Delia, and, above all things, his

precious tools which, whenever he wanted them, were always missing. It was a good while since the foundations were struck, and a plentiful crop of weeds had sprung up. For months Turkey had had to climb into bed at night over a mountain of earth where his feet had tramped a trail, but his time had been so taken up with one thing and another that it was not until his enforced holiday that he had thought seriously of completing the work.

It was over two weeks now since he had been suspended, and the boy had become increasingly gruff and unapproachable. While he was digging, Nick Carter was making his way through the Jungle. The wild-cat snarled at him as the boy crossed his trail; Kubelik II., the Russian wolf-hound, bared his teeth; a mocking-bird swooped down upon him clamorously and brushed him with her wings.

"What a sociable lot of critters you've got about!" Nick said, as he came up.

Turkey growled some unintelligible response and Carter watched the big shovelfuls of earth fall. "What are you digging?" he asked, presently.

"What does it look like—potatoes, soft-shelled clams, or paste diamonds?"

"It looks like a cyclone cellar, I should say. Good thing to have on the place." He laughed disagreeably.

"Say, Turkey," he went on with assumed carelessness, "you don't mind my asking if you know who's responsible for the flood at the High?"

Turkey stopped digging and looked Carter squarely in the face.

"Yes, I know," he said, bluntly.

"If you know, why don't you tell?"

Turkey snorted and struck his spade deep preparatory to a gigantic effort.

"I mean it," said Carter. "I'm sick of it."

"If you're sick of it, you know what you can do," Turkey said, curtly.

"Do any of the other fellows know?"

"Nope."

Some of the shovelfuls were coming pretty close to where Carter was standing. He took the hint and went off, Kubelik II. following him suspiciously. Just as Nick came under the pine tree a heavy body fell out of the tree, and clung tenaciously to the head and shoulders of the trespasser. He yelled at the top of his lungs, and Turkey, suspecting what had happened, came leisurely to the boy's rescue. When Turkey went back to his cellar it was with the pleasantest look he had worn for some days.

Late that afternoon, after school hours, Mr. Brion called at the Jungle. Turkey saw him coming and went out to meet him. After shaking hands, the boy and the schoolmaster seated themselves on the brick veranda. Although Mr. Brion looked very serious, Turkey felt a sense of relief that was almost elation.

"Carter told me about it to-day," began Mr. Brion. "He isn't such a bad

sort of chap, after all. It was because you were 'game' as he expressed it, and had acted 'white' that he confessed. He has to go, of course, and there will be a heavy bill for damages against his father. I'm sorry for Carter." After a pause, Mr. Brion continued, looking at the boy gravely.

"You have suffered, Terence, but it won't hurt you. If you hadn't been pulled up with a round turn your pranks might have turned into just such criminal offenses as this. You might not always have had some one to stand between you and well-deserved punishment. The bolt would have fallen at last."

Terence looked uncomfortable.

"I suppose you didn't think it was fair that I should have allowed you to be put out of school when you knew that I knew you were not guilty. But it was the only way to discover the real culprit. It is a sort of sweat-box process—putting the

real offender through a moral third degree. You'll rarely find a boy so meanspirited that he will not own up in the end rather than see another boy, whom he knows to be innocent, take his punishment. Carter was no exception. You were chosen as the scapegoat because of your well-earned reputation. And, if I must say it, I am not sorry. You have had your lesson. It is true you are only fourteen, but you are as big and as strong as a man, and henceforth you must think manly thoughts and be governed by manly purpose. The boys look up to you as their leader. It is a great responsibility. Try to live up to it."

Mr. Brion got up to go. He wrung the boy's hand, and Turkey stammered his thanks, and tried to say he would be different in future. Mr. Brion understood and shook hands with him again.

Choppy chattered suggestively, and pulled on his chain as the teacher passed by, but, receiving no signal, he scratched his head thoughtfully, and puckered his forehead into a few more wrinkles.

Turkey went back the next day, and although little was said he was made to feel that he had won a new place in the estimation of his schoolmates. The whole story was in circulation and from the moment it was known that there was a boy at the "High" who would rather suffer unjust punishment than "to peach," a new school spirit was born. Turkey had set a new ethical standard that would make itself permanently felt in class-room or playground. As for the boy he felt within himself the strange, uplifting power of a leader, and he determined that henceforth all his influence should be on the side of good and not of evil.

Delia and Polly were talking it over, seated under a shady tree. The whole incident had appealed to Polly's imagination as few things had done in her short lifetime.

"Turkey was splendid!" she said. "I don't know another boy in the world that would have acted as he did."

"I don't see how he could have done anything else," said Delia, simply. "It would have been telling tales. Turkey has never told tales in his life!"

## CHAPTER X

# THE "CORKSCREW"

I was spring in California. Roses of every hue overran the land, climbing to the very chimney-tops, and piling up, at every stopping place, a mass of bloom sometimes a foot deep. On hill-side and mesa poppies made a blaze of yellow. The almond tree was in bloom, and there were acres and acres of apricot and peach trees that looked as if another day would see them in full flower. The bees were busy among the orange blossoms, gathering pollen for their very best honey, and the birds sang not only all the livelong day, but all the livelong night.

And then, one morning, all this picture of bloom was thrown up against a background of dazzling whiteness. Snow had fallen on the mountains! The P. G.'s were in a state of wild excitement.

They had been promised a snowball fight at the first snowfall. To get to the region of snow meant a long, hard climb up a good many perpendicular miles, but most of the class had made the trip before, and a number of burros would be hired for those who wished to ride.

Polly had been asked to go along, and looking like a small mountaineer in her khaki suit, felt hat, high elkskin boots and alpenstick, the little girl set out undauntedly with Delia and Turkey.

To escape the heat of the day it was agreed that the class should meet at seven o'clock in the morning at the foot of the mountains where the trail began. Our little party with Mr. Brion were among the first to arrive, but before long the P. G.'s came trooping in until they numbered between twenty and thirty girls and boys. The pack mules were loaded with lunch baskets and extra wraps, and those who wished to ride were mounted on sturdy burros, the "mountain canaries,"

of local parlance. The usual tardy ones had to be waited for, but at last the signal was given for the start, although several of the P. G.'s, who were contemptuously dubbed "quitters" were still missing. With a whoop the less experienced started up the trail at a bound, the "old timers" taking it more leisurely!

Polly had rather disdainfully declined to be among the riders, and trudged along as if mountain-climbing was an every day occurrence to her, although, to tell the truth, the bare sight of the canyons over the edge of the trail almost took her breath away. The troop of children stopped when they came to a ridge pathway between two gulches to roll down rocks and stones that did not stop till they reached the bottom, thousands of feet below. With her usual facility for making friends, Polly had already attracted a small following, and Delia and Turkey were quite envied that they

should be on so friendly terms with the little girl from Back East.

There was a distant tinkling of bells. "Look out, here come the pack mules!" cried one of the boys in the lead. Turkey explained to Polly that the regular train of pack mules coming down had sometimes a playful little way of shoving off the trail any mules that might be coming up. As the regular train had the inside just at this particular spot it made it a bit uncomfortable for those coming up. There was a hurried dismounting among the more timid, but most of the P. G.'s clung to their animals and it was amusing to see the stolid way in which the up-going mules met the vicious push of the down-coming animals. Outside of the slipping of a hoof or so over the edge and the rattling of stones into the canyon, the trains passed each other in safety.

At last they were coming to the snow

—just a powder at first that cooled the trail, and felt good to tired feet. Polly had the novel sensation of standing in snow and looking down on orange groves and grain fields. It was summer and winter in a single day. Some of the California P. G.'s had never been so close to snow before, and, scraping it up in handfuls, they examined the new element with wonder and delight. The snow was getting deeper. The evergreen trees were mounds of snow—the summits were wrapped in a mantle of white. But snow in this part of the world does not necessarily mean frigid weather, and there was just enough snap in the air to set the blood tingling.

Laughing and shouting, the P. G.'s plunged ahead, making for a certain place where the trail widened into a safe plateau. Here would be the battlefield. But before they gained this point, they had to climb the "corkscrew," a part of the route where the trail fairly stands

up on end, zigzagging back and forth across the face of the peak. Just as the foremost of the band came to the point where the trail makes the first turn on itself, they were greeted with wild shouts and a volley of snowballs, and the laughing faces of the "quitters" looked triumphantly at them over a huge barricade of snow. The attack was so fierce, so unexpected, that the assailed fell back at once. Moreover, just at this point, the wind had swept the trail clear of snow and they were without return ammunition.

Mr. Brion gathered his squad together in the shelter of a great bowlder and talked over the situation. The enemy had chosen an impregnable position. One man could stand up there and unarmed push all the P. G.'s that ever existed over the precipice one by one as they came up the trail. It was a practical illustration of what was done at the Pass of Thermopylæ. One of the Juniors, recalling the story, stepped for a

perilous moment from behind the bowlder and called out, in the historic words of the Persian king, "Surrender your arms!"

"Come and take them!" was the ready response from behind the barricade, a shower of snowballs emphasizing the retort. There was a deep snowdrift behind the bowlder and while Mr. Brion and his suddenly commissioned officers were planning a strategic movement, the rest of the band were busy making snowballs. A fierce head-on onslaught would have been decided upon were it not that the trail at this point was so dangerously narrow, making the risk too great. The besieging party were shouting and jeering-every head that appeared from behind the bowlder was used as a target snowballs were breaking in all directions. Altogether it looked as if there were nothing for it but to break and run, but Mr. Brion, the commander-in-chief, hesitated before giving the signal for so inglorious a retreat.

Suddenly there was a yell like an Indian war-whoop from the heights. The snowballing from behind the barricade abruptly ceased. A storm of snowballs was falling upon the enemy from above, bursting into such clouds that, for a while, the attacking party could not be seen. Then over a shelf of rock, commanding the lower turn of the trail, behind a bulwark of snowballs, Turkey and Delia came into view. Unseen, the brother and sister had daringly left the path, scaled the face of the peak, and gained an upper part of the trail. Here, quite at their ease, and in the utmost security, they were picking off with unerring aim one after another of the erstwhile besiegers. With a howl of triumph loud enough to split the hills, the band with Mr. Brion at their head, closed in on the enemy. It was almost a hand-to-hand fight, and a losing one from the start, and when the commander-in-chief seized the general of the opposing forces and washed his face with snow, the enemy capitulated. But to Turkey and Delia were conceded the honors of the victory.

The battle, thus forced, ended the fighting for the day; and instead of going farther up in the snow, the P. G.'s turned off the main trail and took another that plunged into a vast foliage-clad cleft where there were great pine trees, live-oaks, running brooks, singing birds, and butterflies. As they had walked into winter so they now walked out of it into summer.

## CHAPTER XI

#### THE RESCUE

N a level pine-strewn plateau near a mountain brook the P. G.'s pitched camp, and luncheon was spread on the ground. Polly's basket was particularly inviting, for Yuen had put up enough for half-a-dozen healthy appetites. There were sandwiches of peanut butter, cream cheese, pimentos, and chopped olives, crisp graham biscuits, deviled eggs and sweet pickles, cake and tarts, cracked English walnuts and a glass of crab apple jelly. All these delicacies were done up attractively in waxed paper. Beginning with the dainty pile of crêpe paper napkins on top, Polly with an air of distinction that carried weight with her admirers, shared her luncheon with all within helping distance. Turkey had furnished enough oranges from the Jungle orchard

for all, big navel oranges that were globes of luscious juice.

The pack mules were relieved of their burdens, the saddles uncinched, and they and the shaggy burros were staked in the shade where they could eat and rest comfortably. While the feast was in progress, the "battle of the corkscrew" was the subject of a more or less heated discussion, and at last Mr. Brion called the opposed forces to order by proposing another contest, although of a widely different character. The last mouthfuls were hastily swallowed, everything cleared away, and the scraps buried, for the P. G.'s belonged to the young people's branch of the Civic Order Society, which applied even to mountain-tops.

Mr. Brion then brought out a number of envelopes, which he distributed. Each envelope bore the name of a boy or girl, and contained a small pencil and card. Mr. Brion then explained that the cards were to be filled with the names of the

trees, rocks, and wild flowers of the camping grounds, and for the P. G. who filled correctly his or her card first there would be a prize. The teacher warned the children that although the plateau seemed wide and safe, it was really a tableland lifted high between deep canyons, and that nothing must tempt them over the edge. An hour would be allowed for the filling in of the cards, at the end of which time a horn would be blown as a signal to come back. The P. G.'s then disappeared into the woods. Such a rustling in the chapparal, such shouts and calls, and now and then the sound of the geologic hammer, showing that some student was making more than a superficial study of the rocks! The children had been gone about half an hour, and Mr. Brion was reloading the pack mules and getting ready for departure, when suddenly there was a scream. It seemed to come from the ground under his feet, and with his blood running cold, Mr.

Brion stopped to listen. Again there was a cry, and then there was a dash through the brush. It was Turkey, running like an Indian. Blowing his horn, and seizing a coil of rope he had been using to stake out the animals, Mr. Brion followed at top speed, and came up in time to see Turkey disappear over the edge of the plateau. Looking over, what was the schoolmaster's horror to see a little girl caught in the brush on a ledge of rock some feet below. It was a mere abutment of the pine-clad mountain flank, that went steeply down a thousand feet, and looked all swaying tree tops as far as the eye could reach. In another second, Turkey had the child in his arms -what a misstep would have cost it would not be hard to imagine!

"Stay where you are, Terence!" Mr. Brion thundered. "Don't move till I tell you!"

He looked round for some tree, some bowlder, to which to attach his rope, but the nearest tree was a hundred yards away, and the ground was as bare of stones as a driveway. Tying the rope securely round his waist, Mr. Brion was about to throw the other end to Turkey when he paused. "Is she too badly hurt to be pulled up?" he called.

"Yes. I'm afraid her arm is broken. I've got to carry her—she's helpless!"

"Wait. I'll be back in a moment!" Gathering up the rope as he went Mr. Brion was off like the wind, presently returning with a shorter rope used for packing, and his hunting knife, which he had left behind. Unwinding the lariat round his body, he threw one end of it to Turkey. "Tie it securely round your waist," he said. When this was done, he threw down the packing-rope. "Put her on your back," he said, "she can hold on with her good arm. Tie her securely with the rope. You can do it—there's room to turn round in. Hold on to the rope and come up. There's a footing to

your right. I will be your anchor. Wait till I signal."

With his hunting-knife Mr. Brion hastily made a foot-hold in the granite soil some feet away from the edge of the cliff. Seated on the ground, his heels dug into the holes he had made, Mr. Brion seized the rope, and bracing himself, pulled with all his might and main, trusting to his trained muscles, and the staying power of his one hundred and eightyfive pounds to land Turkey and his charge. As the boy mounted step by step, Mr. Brion took up the slack rope, hand over hand. He heard nothing but the pounding of his heart, the roar of the blood in his ears. Just when the strain upon nerves and muscles seemed at the breaking point, half-a-dozen big stalwart boys, all P. G.'s, ran up. In silence two of them flung themselves upon the rope and tugged for dear life, while another, after a brief talk with his companions, went over the cliff, face down, held in his perilous position by a boy at each leg. Here he hung, ready to seize Turkey when he came within reach. In a few minutes more Turkey's head reappeared over the cliff; and with a strong pull the boy and the child clinging to his back, were brought to safety.

Polly, for Polly it was, began to cry, but on examination, it was found that her hurt was nothing worse than a broken collar-bone, although that was, indeed, bad enough. Her arm hung useless at her side, but she insisted upon being put on her feet, and although each step brough a groan to her lips she walked to camp, where, in obedience to the horn Mr. Brion had blown before going to the rescue, the P. G.'s were straggling in. When Mr. Brion asked for bandages, Delia, with her accustomed quick-wittedness, tore her white petticoat into strips. With these Mr. Brion tightly bandaged the child's arm (fortunately her left arm) to her body to save, as much as possible, any jar to the broken bone. Polly was then mounted on a burro; and in sympathetic silence, the P. G.'s set out on the homeward journey.

Polly tried to be brave, but when they had climbed out of the glen, and were once more on the mountain trail, she could stand the jolting of the burro no longer, and looked ready to faint. A stretcher was hastily improvised out of a heavy shawl that was found among the extra wraps in one of the packs, and two cedar poles which were cut from the mountain side. Polly was then carefully placed on the stretcher and carried down the trail, the boys relieving one another by relays. Sometimes the stretcher, as it made a sharp turn, was at so perilous an angle that Polly shut her eyes and clung to the pole with her one free hand. But the boys picked their steps carefully, and after two harrowing hours, the descent was safely made.

Mr. Brion telephoned to Mrs. Day

from the nearest station, and when the subdued little procession came up to the house, the anxious mother was waiting on the veranda with a surgeon and nurse.

"I'm all right, mother dear!" said Polly, trying to smile. "But it's good to be home!"

Lying on the stretcher, pale and weak, her arm bound to her body, the brave khaki suit stained with blood, Polly looked like a small soldier borne off the field of battle. It was enough to move any mother's heart.

"Take her to the redwood room, boys, please," Mrs. Day said, trying to keep back the tears.

"No, please take me to my own room, mother dear."

Mrs. Day hesitated.

"We've done the trail, Mrs. Day—it's no worse," said Turkey, who at that moment was at one end of the stretcher. The boy smiled cheerfully, and he and his companion made off for the stairway.

So Polly had her wish, and she was put to bed in her own bright little room where the long windows opened on the balcony, and she could see the dear old mountains from her pillow.

### CHAPTER XII

## "LILLY MISSY"

It was nearly two weeks since Polly had met with her accident. She was now allowed to sit up in bed, her arm still tightly bound to her body. The Jungle people were very kind and attentive to the little invalid. Turkey's contribution towards Polly's amusement was a lizard tethered by a slender chain to a big pin which could be staked anywhere. It was a graceful little creature, with a long slender tail, and beautifully marked with brown dots. Delia lent Billy, her horned toad. It had a string tied to its horns, and it was so tame that it would take milk and flies from Polly's fingers. Whenever Billy felt himself watched he would make himself so flat that he looked as if he could be passed under a closed door, and shutting his eyes would feign death. But a

little tickling brought him to life, and in an ecstasy of enjoyment he would inflate his body until he was almost as round as a ball.

When Jane first saw Polly lying on a sick bed, she broke into loud lamentations.

"It's sorry I am for you, Polly dear," she said, "but in what better place, I'm asking, could you have a broken bone than just here in Californy? And it's a blessing we came," the good woman said, somewhat incoherently.

Jane made an excellent nurse in the sick room, and now that Buddy was allowed to go about alone he put off his baby ways and suddenly assumed the dignity and the privileges of belated boyhood. Three times a day Yuen presented himself at the threshold, tray in hand.

"Velly solly, lilly Missy," was his invariable greeting; but although his English was limited, his dainty dishes were eloquent of the Chinaman's sympathy.

One day when Yuen had set down his tray and gone, Polly said:

"Have you ever thought, mother dear,

that Yuen is a heathen?"

"A heathen!" broke in Jane. "Heathen or no heathen, I can say for meself that I never got along with any Christian girl in the kitchen like I get along with that Chinee. But, maybe, come to think, it's because we don't understand the other's talk." Jane nodded her head wisely. "I know, too," she went on, "Christian or heathen, I never did eat such biscakes."

Mrs. Day and Polly laughed, and Jane looked gratified, for there was always a sly sense of humor in her remarks.

"But, mother," Polly went on, becoming serious again, "don't you think we ought to do something for Yuen's soul? Just think how St. Francis crossed the ocean and gave up his life for the Chinese, and how our dear old Padres worked in this country for the Indians."

Mrs. Day saw that her daughter was stirred by a noble impulse, and the next time the "boy" came into the room, the mother said:

"Yuen, do you know how to read and write?"

"Yes, no-just lilly bit."

"My little daughter is going to teach you how to read and write, and every day you can come up here for your lessons."

"Velly much like to lead and lite," the

man said gratefully.

The next day Polly was seated in a big chair at the window. Beside her was a table on which were books and writing materials, and Yuen had his first lesson. When he came with Polly's tray the next morning, he drew from beneath his white apron his new copy-book. He had covered pages and pages with a painstaking and creditable copy of the model set before him, and Polly was delighted.

"Allee days, I take lilly book and lead

and lite. Plenty lite," the man said, his oblique eyes fairly dancing.

It was astonishing the progress Yuen made, but at all hours of the day, whenever he could spare a moment from his work, he might be seen poring over his books at his clean kitchen table. Sometimes he decorated his book with blue, red, and purple which he got out of his coloring extract bottles, and made his page look like the top of the famous Washington Birthday meringue. One day Polly said, gravely:

"Do you love God, Yuen?"

He looked at her uncomprehendingly.

"I will tell you about God," the child said. "You must love God, Yuen, or I won't give you any more lessons!"

Mrs. Day smiled to herself at Polly's

ingenuousness.

"Lilly Missy love God?" he asked.

"I should say!" Polly replied, in Delia's choice phrase.

"Me love God, too," he said.

The next time the good missionary Brother at the old mission of San Gabriel came to see Polly, the little girl told him about Yuen. The Padre talked to the man in his own language, and found him intelligent, but quite at sea as to what his little mistress meant about loving God. But when he understood that it was for the love of God that Polly was teaching him to read and write, and because God loved him, poor, ignorant, unworthy as he was, that He had sent "lilly Missy" clear across the continent to show him the way to the Blessed Country, Yuen's mind began to open to the great truth of Christianity, which is love; and he was eager to learn more. It was a good half-day's walk, there and back, to the missionary Fathers; but every Sunday afternoon Yuen went over the Camino Real, the king's highway, the same road where so many years ago Padre Junipero Serra,

had gone, weary and footsore, to call the Indians out of the wilderness to join him in praising God! In the same missionary spirit the good old Brother taught his neophyte—and there in the shadow of the old mission church of San Gabriel, the Chinaman was prepared for baptism.

Polly's broken bone healed, her arm was taken out of the sling, and, except for a little stiffness that came from disuse, the child was as well as ever. Mr. Brion had called many times to see the little invalid, and he soon became an intimate friend of the house.

"Polly," he said, one day, "you have never told me just how the accident occurred."

Polly turned red and her mother laughed.

"My little girl is very ambitious, you must know," Mrs. Day said. "When she saw certain red berries over the edge of the cliff she quite forgot your warning

and in her anxiety to secure something that she thought must be very rare, she went too close, lost her balance, and went over."

"Mother, dear, it wasn't so much the berries," Polly said, courageously, "but the wonderful color of the tree. The bark was deep red and very smooth, and all over it were satiny pale green patches. And the leaves shone as if they were varnished. Somehow, it made everything else look dusty and faded."

"Why, Polly, do you know you are describing the most beautiful tree in Alta-California!" said Mr. Brion, with enthusiasm. "It is what is called the Madroña. I didn't know it could be found in these mountain ranges. You are not the first person, my child, to discover the beauty of this tree. Have you Bret Harte's poems?"

Mrs. Day found the volume on the book shelves and Mr. Brion read, in his rich, expressive voice:

"Captain of the Western wood,
Thou that apest Robin Hood!
Green above thy scarlet hose,
How thy velvet mantle shows!
Never tree like thee arrayed,
Oh, thou gallant of the glade.

"When the fervid August sun Scorches all it looks upon, And the balsam of the pine Drops from stem to needle fine, Round thy compact shade arranged, Not a leaf of thee is changed!

"When the yellow autumn sun Saddens all it looks upon, Spreads its sackcloth on the hills, Strews its ashes in the rills, Thou thy scarlet hose doth doff And in limbs of purest buff Challenges the somber glade For a sylvan masquerade.

"Where, O where, shall we begin Who would paint thee, Harlequin? With thy waxen burnished leaf, With thy branches' red relief, With thy polytinted fruit—
In thy spring or autumn suit—
Where begin, and oh! where end—
Thou whose charms all art transcend?"

"You are a lucky little girl," said Mr. Brion, when he put down the book, "to have come upon a tree so beautiful that our best beloved California writer should make it the subject of a lyric, and I don't wonder that you risked something to get closer to it."

#### CHAPTER XIII

#### GOING AWAY

The time was drawing near when Mrs. Day and her little family must leave the wonderful summer land where they had passed so many happy months. Yuen was to be baptized. Turkey was to be his godfather, and Polly was very anxious to be godmother, but it was decided that it would be better that Delia should hold that relation toward the Chinaman, as Polly would be so far away that it would make the spiritual kinship a mere form.

On next to the last day they would all be together, Mrs. Day, Polly, Buddy, Jane, the Jungle people and Yuen Wong went in a big hay wagon, thickly bedded with sweet smelling alfalfa, to the mission church of old San Gabriel, Turkey, up on the high front seat, driving the two

great dappled gray draught-horses that could have walked off with anything.

There it stood, the venerable, fortress-like building, with its look of ripe maturity, the ancient walls as yellow as the valley grain fields, now in stubble, as mellow as the harvested foothills that, in their yellow mantles, looked like huge hay-stacks against the blue sky. The grasses of field and roadside were so dry that they turned to chaff and crumbled to powder underfoot, giving out the pungent sweet smell of sage and anise.

The old baptistry, in a wing of the church, was under a dome-like roof shaped like a half orange; and its floor of red sun-baked bricks was worn hollow by feet that had passed by in the long ago. In the wide, shallow copper font, hammered out by the Indians in the Mission period, were the healing waters. Here, according to the records, twelve thousand Indians had been baptized; and it was here, too, that Yuen Wong received the

white robe of innocence. Turkey and Delia, both looking very tall and solemn, stood beside the faithful servant, feeling to the utmost the obligations they were assuming toward their little yellow brother.

Yuen had on a voluminous costume of dark blue silk, so rich with embroidery that Jane whispered to Mrs. Day that she believed that Yuen Wong was a Chinee-Mandaree or a Chop-Suey in disguise! After the ceremony each had some little gift for the neophyte; but the one Yuen most prized was the rosary of crushed rose-petals "lilly Missy" had made for him herself.

The whole party, after visiting the Mission gardens, where there is a rose vine over a hundred years old with a trunk like a tree, went to the top of the Campanile, where the ancient bells hang.

"I will tell you the legend of the bells when story-telling time comes, children," said Mrs. Scott.

Then they all climbed into the wagon again and went leisurely through the beautiful San Gabriel valley, with its vineyards and sugar-beet fields, and ragged groves of eucalyptus trees, till they came to a thick woods on the edge of the San Gabriel River. The clear, swift-flowing stream in its silver channel of glistening pebbles was a refreshing sight, where water is so rare; and narrow as the river was, there was a strip of beach on each side of its banks. The children went in wading, Jane with her little charge, and soon shouts were exchanged up and down stream as schools of minnows swam past bare feet, eluding the eager hands stretched out for them.

Yuen had exchanged his gorgeous costume for his usual neat uniform, and, in white apron, was busy making a fire on a bed of stones. While the logs were burning he spread a luncheon-cloth on the dry sand on the edge of a grove of cottonwoods covered with festoons of wild

grapevine. Out of the well-packed hamper came, seemingly, an inexhaustible supply of good things to eat. But not yet did Yuen bow ceremoniously before his mistress.

The logs had fallen into red coals, the stones were heated through and through. Unrolling a piece of heavy galvanized wire netting, Yuen stretched his improvised gridiron over the coals; and using a sharpened stick as fork, was soon broiling thick sirloin steaks with as much dexterity as over his kitchen range.

"A barbecue, a barbecue!" shouted Turkey. Never was there such a meal, never did meat taste like Yuen's barbecue, and when milk for the little ones and fresh-made coffee for the elders were brought on, it was a feast indeed!

To finish up, there were marshmallows skewered on long pointed sticks to be toasted over the still red coals; and then once more the never-ending delights of the quick-running stream. No need to

hurry home, for after the long day came to an end there would be moonlight!

Suddenly the Angelus of the old Mission bells rang clear, sweet, and penetrating across the valley. It was the signal

for the promised story.

"This is the legend of the bells," said Mrs. Scott when her audience, Yuen included, had gathered about her on the level banks of the little river that was beginning to turn red under the sunset sky.

"When the old Padres sailed from Spain, many years ago, a young soldier, by the name of Don Rafael, went with them. Now, he loved a beautiful young Spanish maiden named Augustias. Just as soon as he returned from the new country they were to be married. But Don Rafael was killed by the treacherous arrow of an Indian, and was buried within the Mission walls. The ship that should have brought back the young soldier to his sweetheart carried for Augustias only

the sad news of her lover's death. Poor Augustias, how she grieved for him, how she prayed for him! Spain's gift to the new Mission church was to be a chime of bells. On the day the bells were to be cast, Augustias went to the spot, and when the red hot metal was poured into the molds, the maiden threw all her jewels, the most precious of which were a ring and a gold cross that Rafael had given her, into the seething furnace.

"'Bells, you can go, but I must stay,' she said, 'so take to my dear love all my love and prayers!'

"Men and women who stood by wept aloud so sorrowful was the sight of the stricken maid, and then, tearing off their ornaments, they, too, flung them into the molten mass, so that with the metal of the bells were mixed gold, silver, and precious stones.

"The next time the Angelus rings from the old Mission tower listen and you will hear the bells say 'Rafael! Rafael! Rafael!' three times, and then die away in a long sigh."

So deep was the silence that followed upon the story that the low, sweet, peeping notes of the spotted sandpipers running along the edge of the water on the opposite shore could be distinctly heard.

The next afternoon the same party was gathered on the platform of the Santa Fé station. The Days were going away! The Jungle people were laden with packages of a more or less mysterious size and shape; but none of these were to be opened till the train started. Delia whispered to Polly, "Open mine first—don't forget!"

Everybody was resolved to be cheerful and to make the most of the last precious minutes. They would all meet again—so each one separately and in a body, said, over and over—if not on this side of the continent, the other. Polly's lizard was securely tethered against the breast of her

frock, and, with a fine instinct of selfpreservation, had climbed up to his little mistress' shoulder, where he would be well out of the way of farewell hugs.

Just at the last minute, Mr. Brion came along with great strides. He had a package, too.

"Polly," he said, after shaking hands all around, "the P. G.'s have decided that the prize belongs to you for tumbling over the cliff in the cause of science, and, incidentally, discovering the Madroña. But don't open the package till you are on the train!"

Mr. Brion's words caused such excitement that everybody forgot that it was a going-away party; and when the porter called out "All aboard!" Turkey, Delia, the schoolmaster, and Yuen Wong made such a dash for traveling bags and things, and the Days, even to Buddy, made such a scramble for the coach, that there was a general shout. And so, with laughing faces on the platform, and laughing faces

at the windows, the Days and their California friends parted.

As soon as the train pulled out Polly opened her packages, beginning with Delia's, as she had been asked.

"It's Billy," she cried, "it's dear old Billy!" She took the horned toad out of his perforated box, and kissing him on his thorny nose staked him out on a vacant seat.

Turkey's gift was a carefully mounted trap-door spider along with its silk-lined home. Then Polly unwrapped Mr. Brion's gift.

"Look, mother, it's a book—'Trees of California'—beautifully illustrated. And here's what it says:

"'From the P. G.'s to P. D., the little girl from Back East.'"

Among the gifts was a wonderfully lifelike mechanical squirrel for Buddy, and a lot of things to read and eat for Mrs. Day. Nor was Jane forgotten. It was not until they came to the delicacies

that Yuen had put up that they discovered a long, flat, shallow box. It was unmarked, and Mrs. Day, opening the box, shook out from the folds of scented tissue paper a beautiful silk kimona just big enough for Polly embroidered with chrysanthemums, and tucked away in a corner was a card embellished with the familiar red and blue of the coloring extracts, inscribed, in a careful hand, "Lilly Missy."

All these repeated proofs of the love and kindness of the friends she was leaving were almost too much for Polly. The beautiful summer land was getting every minute farther away. The little girl's face clouded; a "misty moisty Day" was threatening when Jane said, impressively, looking at Yuen's gift:

"What have I been after telling yees all along! He's a Chinee-Mandaree, Chop-Suey, sure! And what we've been having in our kitchen cooking for us all winter is one of them Chinee Micadoes!

If we hadn't been forehanded, and made a Christian out of him first, it's no telling but he'd have smuggled us all over the ocean to his own land and made heathens out of ivery wan of us!"

And then, before the cloud could settle down upon Polly's face again, Jane wound up the mechanical squirrel and sent him hopping along the general passageway.

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